

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic MURDOCK, JOSEPH S., HOUSE

and or common

## 2. Location

street &amp; number 115 East 300 North not for publication

city, town Heber City vicinity of

state Utah code 049 county Wasatch code 051

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Dee R. and Patsy R. McElroy

street &amp; number 300 Avenue A

city, town Wharton vicinity of state Texas

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wasatch County Courthouse

street &amp; number Main Street

city, town Heber City state Utah

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Heber City Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate July 1978 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Preservation Office, Utah State Historical Society

city, town Salt Lake City state Utah

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Continuation sheet Joseph S. Murdock  
Heber City, Wasatch County Item number 8

Page 2

the other bands went to Murdock's house and signed a peace treaty.<sup>2</sup> There were several raids and skirmishes subsequent to this event, but within a year the war was ended.

In 1867 Murdock was again called by Brigham Young to lead a pioneering expedition, this time on the Muddy River in Nevada. The community Murdock founded was called St. Joseph and was intended to provide a buffer area between the Mormon settlements in southern Utah and the rapidly expanding Nevada mining frontier. After three years he returned to Heber City where he resumed his role as a community leader and bishop.

A polygamist with four wives, Joseph S. Murdock purchased three lots on Block 125 in the Heber City survey. A smaller log house belonging to Elisha Averett was standing on the property, probably on lot 3. Murdock's second wife Elizabeth lived there until probably around 1890, when a new frame house was constructed, and in which she lived until her death in 1918. A two-room log house was soon built on lot 1 for his second wife, Jane, and her family. This house continues to stand, although it now has a rear ell addition and has been plastered. For his other wives, Murdock built the large stone house that is the subject of this nomination, probably around 1865. Eliza Clark Murdock, his second wife, and the Ute/Shoshone woman, Nettie, lived here. The house is said to have been divided in half vertically so that each wife had a similar two-level, two-room living space. Murdock was in essence providing two small, though substantial, apartments for his wives.

In 1889 Murdock was tried and convicted for violating the Edmunds-Tucker Law, which prohibited the practice of polygamy in the United States. Refusing to repudiate his wives, Murdock served a brief prison term in that year. Several years earlier in 1837, Murdock had transferred his property to wives, Jane, Eliza, and Elizabeth (Nettie died in 1884) to avoid the possibility of using these assets to pay his criminal fines. Murdock died in 1899, and following Eliza's death in 1900, the stone house was purchased by John H. Murdock, one of the oldest of Joseph's thirty-two children. John followed his father's lead and became a Mormon colonizer (along the Little Colorado River in Northern Arizona). The younger Murdock played a major role in developing frontier irrigation systems, serving as president of both the St. Johns (Arizona) and Heber City irrigation companies.

The Murdock House is a relatively intact example of the red sandstone houses erected in Heber City following the first period of log and adobe cabin construction. It draws its significance primarily from its association with John Stacy Murdock, although in conjunction with the smaller houses of wives Jane and Elizabeth, it provides a rare glimpse into the world of early polygamist architecture in Utah. The Jane and Elizabeth Murdock houses still stand, and will be considered for future nominations to the National Register.

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated on the southwest corner of Plat A, lot 2, block 125 in Heber City, Utah, the Joseph Stacy Murdock House is a two-story example of the double-cell vernacular house type. It is built of locally-quarried red sandstone laid in a random rubble fashion. Above the two-over-two sash windows are fine bush-hammered red sandstone lintels with chiseled margins. All masonry components are set in lime mortar. Two chimneys, each in the backside of one of the clipped or "jerkin-head" gables, are made of red brick. Both the roof and chimneys are replacements, probably added sometime in the early twentieth century. An asphalt shingle roof has been placed over a layer of cedar shingle roofing. The roof cornice projects slightly from the stone walls and consists of flat fascia boards with no moulded pieces. The gable ends feature bungalow-style cornice returns containing small, recessed semi-circle motifs.

The house is four bays wide and presents an asymmetrical window-window-door-window piercing arrangement. Windows only are found on the second story, one above each lower story opening. The front door contains twelve small window lights, and protecting this entry is a gable porch supported by plain wooden columns set in a concrete porch. Neither the door nor the front porch are original, although their precise dates are not known. The east elevation is blank and the west elevation has off-set windows on both floors. The north rear elevation originally had two outside doors. One of these doors now opens into a c.1940 wooden shed, while the other has been converted into a window.

The interior arrangement of the house adheres to the basic two-room double cell type. Two roughly square rooms are found on the ground floor, the difference in size being the width of the internal partition. Evidence suggests that the same plan was repeated on the upper level, but partitions now divide this space into three smaller rooms. The stairway appears to be a c.1920 addition (perhaps inserted when other changes were made to the roof). A bathroom has been carved out of the west first story room and a kitchen added. The large fireplaces in all four rooms have been closed, and most of the original woodwork removed.

The small barn, granary, and outhouse which once stood on the site are now gone. The only extant outbuilding on the property is a small wooden garage which does not contribute to the significance of the property.

The Joseph Stacy Murdock house has undergone extensive remodeling during the last century. It has a new roof and largely new interior, yet the historical association with Murdock, one of Mormonism early leading citizens, remains firmly embedded in the well-preserved sandstone walls.

Number of contributing buildings: 1

Number of non-contributing buildings: 1

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c.1865–1899, 1867 Builder/Architect Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Joseph Stacy Murdock House, built in Heber City Utah c.1865, is historically significant for its association with Murdock, an important early convert to and later leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormons, and as the site of an important early treaty between the Mormon settlers and the local Ute-Shoshone people. Murdock was a friend and advisor to the Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith, before the martyrdom in 1844, and served in a similar capacity to Smith's successor, Brigham Young, during the Mormon colonization of the Great Basin West after 1847. In 1863, Murdock became the first ecclesiastical leader of Heber City, the principal settlement in the Provo River Valley east of Salt Lake City. Murdock was integrally involved in all facets of Heber City life, and his personal relations with the Ute-Shoshone chief, Tabiona, helped ease Mormon-Indian tensions in the area during the Black Hawk War. An important treaty between the two leaders, signed in this house in 1867, was instrumental in bringing an end to the hostilities. In addition to his leadership role in Heber City, Murdock led the expedition that established the Mormon buffer settlements along the Muddy River in northern Nevada between 1867 and 1870.

Joseph Stacy Murdock was born June 26, 1822 in Hamilton, New York.<sup>1</sup> Murdock became a convert to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormons, in 1836, and soon became a friend and personal body guard of Joseph Smith, the Church's founder and prophet. He married Eunice Sweet in 1842, and migrated west to Utah in the first wave of Mormon colonization in 1847. Murdock lived first in Salt Lake City where, following the death of his first wife, he married Eliza Clark. Born in Herefordshire, England, May 17, 1830, Eliza was among a congregation of United Brethren converted to Mormonism by missionary and future LDS president Wilford Woodruff. In 1854 Murdock married two other wives, Jane Sharp and Elizabeth Hunter, under the Mormon doctrine of polygamy.

Murdock moved his growing family southward to Provo in 1860, and he stayed there until called by LDS Church President Brigham Young to preside over the Mormon settlements in the upper Provo River Valley. He settled first in the community of Midway in 1861, and moved to Heber City, the principal city in the valley, in 1863. In his capacity as LDS church leader, and as a member of the territorial legislature, Murdock played a leading role in local activities, and was particularly instrumental in resolving difficulties during the Black Hawk War of the 1860s. Respected by the local Ute/Shoshone tribe because he reared and later married an Indian woman, Pernetta (Nettie) Murdock, Murdock was known for his kindness to and fair treatment of the native people. He persuaded Chief Tabiona (brother of the feared Chief Black Hawk) and some lesser chiefs to come to Heber City for a feast, which was held under a powery in a lot across the street from Murdock's stone house. After a meal and presents of flour, bacon and beef, Chief Tabiona and the chiefs of

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Joseph S. Murdock House

Continuation sheet Heber City Wasatch County Item number 8

Page 3

<sup>1</sup>Biographical details are drawn from, William James Mortimer, ed. How Beautiful Upon the Mountains (Heber City: Wasatch County Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1963); George A. Thompson, "Advancing the Mormon Frontier: The Life and Times of Joseph Stacy Murdock," unpublished manuscript, LDS Church Archives; and Frank Esshom, Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah (Salt Lake City: Western Epics, 1966): 1050-1051.

<sup>2</sup>Thompson, "Advancing the Mormon Frontier," 149-153.



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

How Beautiful Upon the Mountains, Comp. & Ed. by Wm. James Mortimer,  
Wasatch County Chapter, D.U.P., Deseret News Press, 1963.  
Wasatch County Records

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Heber City

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	2	4	6	5	2	1	0	4	4	8	4	4	3	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** BEGINNING at the Southwest corner of Lot 2, Block 125, HEBER CITY SURVEY OF BUILDING LOTS, and running thence South 85° 58' East 100.32 feet; thence North 1° 01' East 99.5 feet; thence North 88° 58' West 100.32 feet; thence South 1° 01' West 99.5 feet to the place of beginning.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state		code	county		code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Allen D. Roberts, Architect

organization Cooper/Roberts Architects, AIA

date November 1986

street & number 202 West 300 North

telephone (801) 355-5915

city or town Salt Lake City

state Utah

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

     national      state   X   local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Max J. Evans, State Historic Preservation Officer

date March 12, 1987

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration